

In order to assist in understanding of the relevance of this reference to the subject matter of claims 1-12, Applicants submit herewith a complete English translation thereof.

According to this reference (Adachi et al.), a hydrolyzate of a tetraalkoxysilane compound in the presence of ammonia as a catalyst is subjected to gelation as such to form a wet gel swollen with an organic solvent from which the organic solvent is removed by evaporation to form a monolith of the dried gel to be subjected to sintering, for example, at 1050°C into a silica glass block.

In contrast thereto, the coating solution of present claims 1-6 is a uniform solution containing no gelled matter which would definitely have an adverse effect on the uniformity of the coating films formed from the coating solution. Moreover, the method of present claims 7-12 does not involve a step of removal of the organic solvent from a wet mass of the gelled hydrolyzate.

Thus, the 35 USC 102(b) rejection of claims 1-12 is untenable.

Claims 14-16 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Adachi et al. in view of Takei et al. on the ground that the difference between the instant claims and Adachi et al. is that Adachi et al. is directed to formation of glass monoliths while Takei et al. teach that similar sol-gel type systems can be used to form monoliths or coating films (emphasis added). Upon careful study of the full text of the JP document, Applicants have failed to find any disclosure which supports the rejection's allegation of the formation of "coating films".

Moreover, there is submitted herewith a complete English translation of the Takei et al. JP reference.

The references are silent on the dielectric constant of the silica material prepared by the sol-gel method while the specific dielectric constant of the silica coating film is a requirement of present claim 16.

Lastly, it is noted that the Official Action fails to discuss the patentability of claim 13 from which claims 14 and 15 depend.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6 and 16 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by Tomikawa et al. on the ground that the reference teaches a coating composition comprising


methyl trimethoxysilane, water, N-methyl pyrrolidone and a base and film formation therefrom. As will be seen from the enclosed full English translation of Tomikawa et al., the subject matter of the reference is a chemical ray-polymerizable composition used for photolithographic patterning by irradiation with UV light. One of the essential features of Tomikawa et al. is the very unique silane compound represented by the general formula [I] in which R_1 of R_1O is a benzyl group substituted by 1-4 ~~ethoxy~~ ethoxy groups and/or nitro groups. Such very specific silane compound is not one of the ingredients in the coating solution of present claims 1-3, 5 and 6 or in the coating solution used for the formation of the silica-based coating film claimed in claim 16. Accordingly, anticipation rejection of these claims is untenable as would be an obviousness rejection.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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